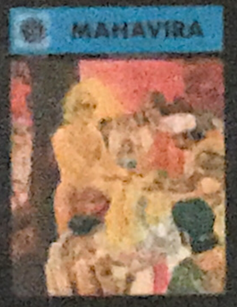
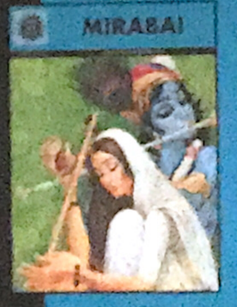
GURU TEGH BAHADUR

The 13-year-old fought as valiantly as a lion and his proud father dubbed him Tegh Bahadur, or Brave Knight of the Sword. But this lad also loved the arts, had studied the sciences, and enjoyed spending time in prayer and meditation. Moreover, he was truly selfless, and it was this quality that made him such a fitting leader of men, even in his death.

OTHER ACK VISIONARIES:





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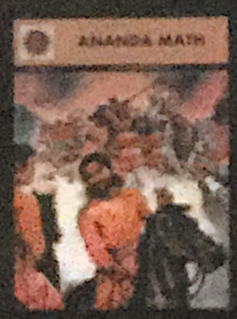

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VISIONARIES

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

GURU TEGH BAHADUR

THE GENTLE SIKH WARRIOR

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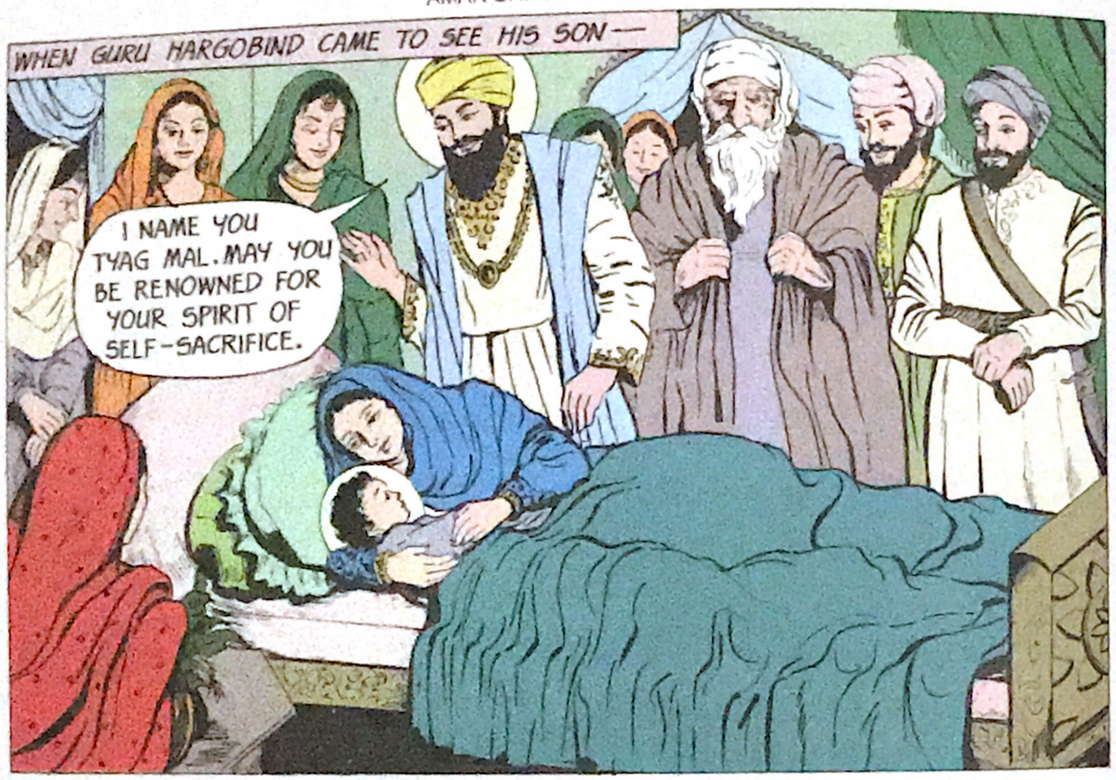
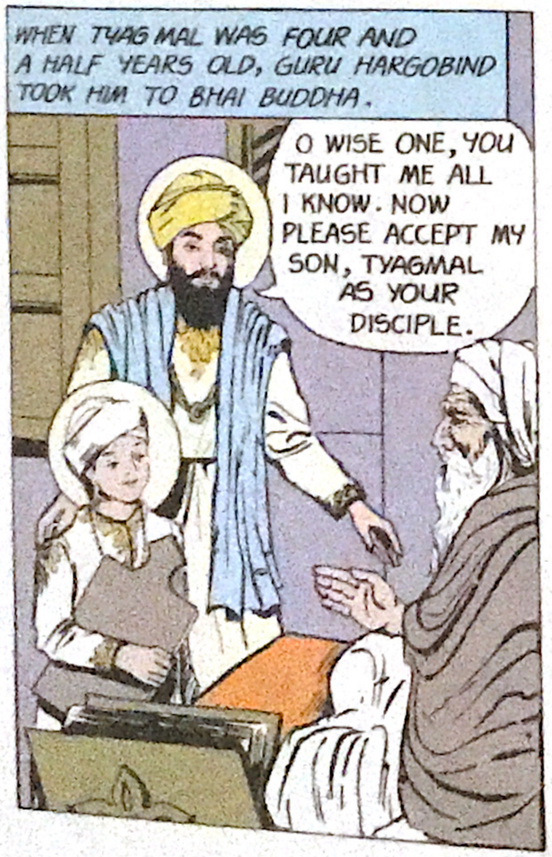
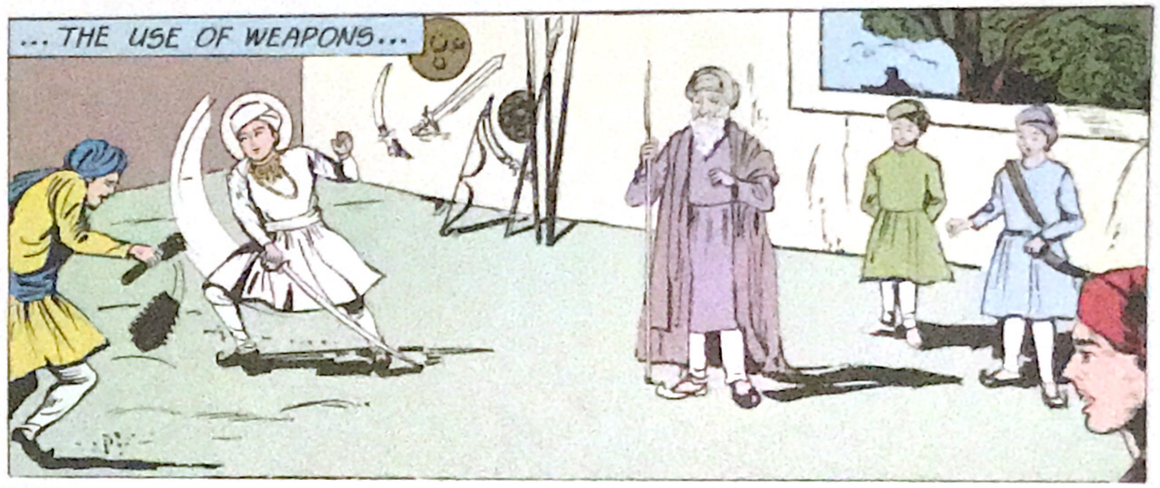
GURU TEGH BAHADUR

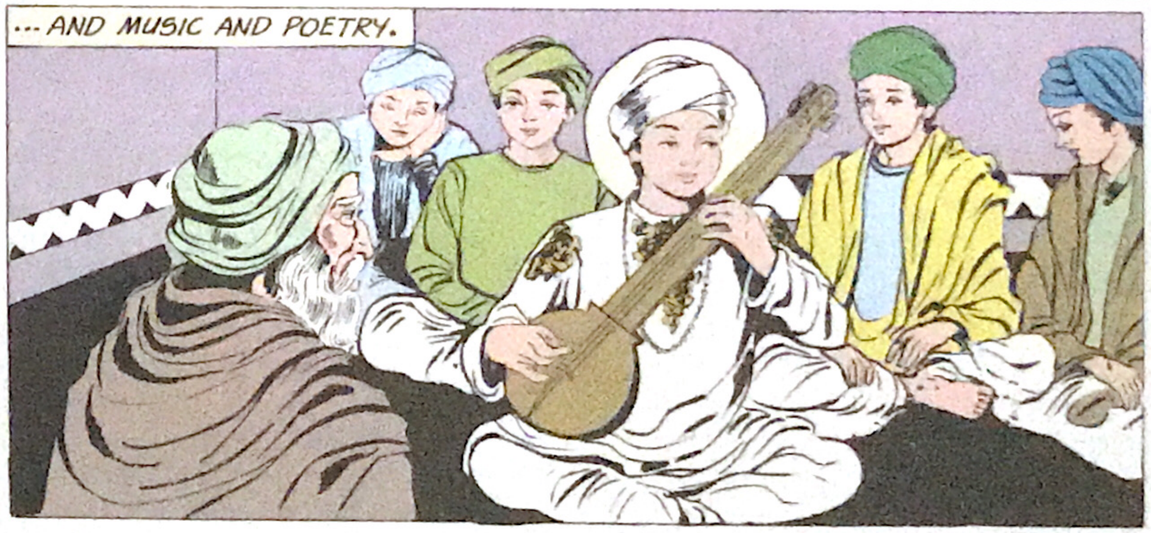
AT DAWN, ON APRIL 1, 1621, A CHILD WAS BORN IN THE HOLY CITY OF AMRITSAR, TO NANKI AND GURU HARGOBIND, THE SIXTH GURU OF THE SIKHS.


WHEN GURU HARGOBIND CAME TO SEE HIS SON—
I NAME YOU TYAG MAL. MAY YOU BE RENOWNED FOR YOUR SPIRIT OF SELF-SACRIFICE.


WHEN TYAG MAL WAS FOUR AND A HALF YEARS OLD, GURU HARGOBIND TOOK HIM TO BHAI BUDDHA.
O WISE ONE, YOU TAUGHT ME ALL I KNOW. NOW PLEASE ACCEPT MY SON, TYAGMAL AS YOUR DISCIPLE.

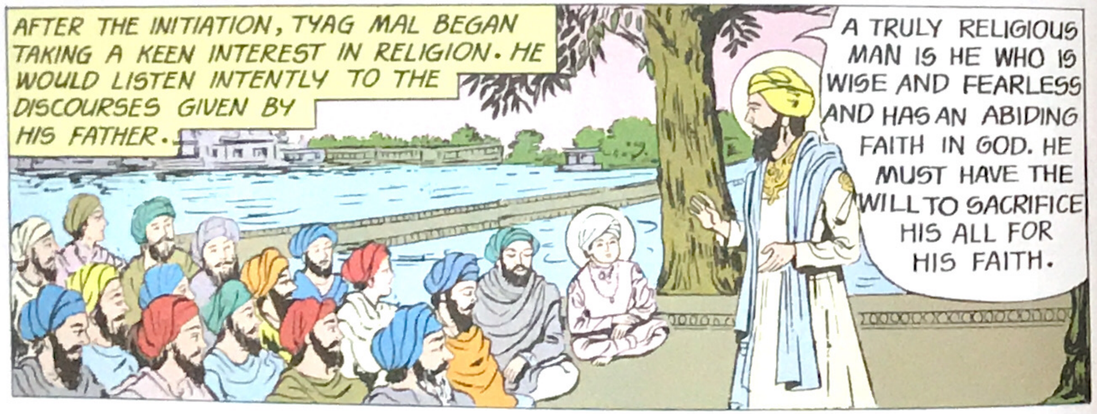
THE HOLY TEACHER TAUGHT TYAG MAL THE SCIENCES AND THE HUMANITIES...


...THE USE OF WEAPONS...

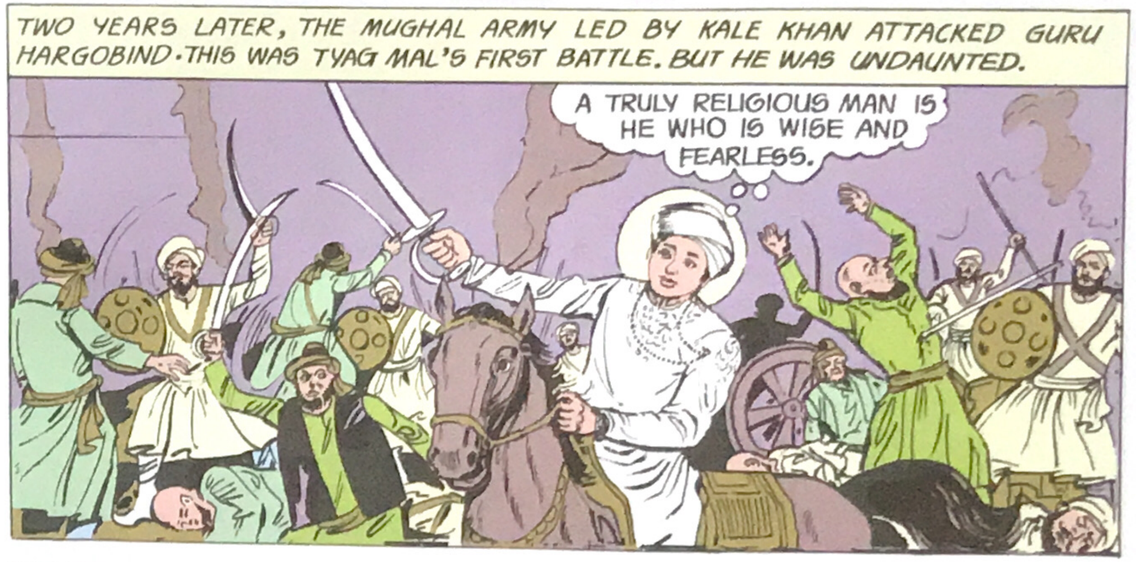

...AND MUSIC AND POETRY.

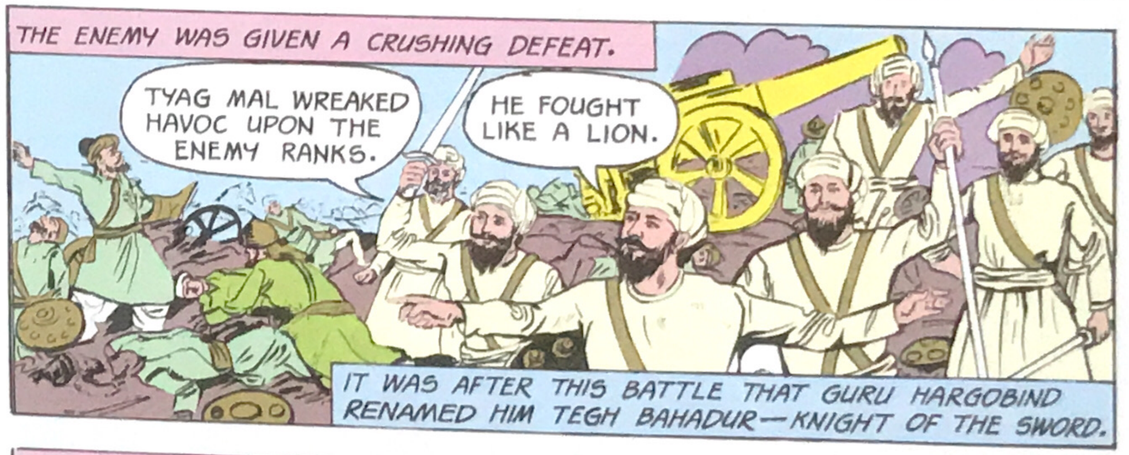
THREE YEARS LATER, TYAG MAL WAS INITIATED.

IN HIM, I SEE A SAVIOUR OF THE PEOPLE.


AFTER THE INITIATION, TYAG MAL BEGAN TAKING A KEEN INTEREST IN RELIGION. HE WOULD LISTEN INTENTLY TO THE DISCOURSES GIVEN BY HIS FATHER.
A TRULY RELIGIOUS MAN IS HE WHO IS WISE AND FEARLESS AND HAS AN ABIDING FAITH IN GOD. HE MUST HAVE THE WILL TO SACRIFICE HIS ALL FOR HIS FAITH.

WHEN HE WAS ELEVEN YEARS OLD, TYAG MAL WAS MARRIED TO GUJRI.


TWO YEARS LATER, THE MUGHAL ARMY LED BY KALE KHAN ATTACKED GURU HARGOBIND. THIS WAS TYAG MAL'S FIRST BATTLE. BUT HE WAS UNDAUNTED.
A TRULY RELIGIOUS MAN IS HE WHO IS WISE AND FEARLESS.


THE ENEMY WAS GIVEN A CRUSHING DEFEAT.
TYAG MAL WREAKED HAVOC UPON THE ENEMY RANKS.
HE FOUGHT LIKE A LION.
IT WAS AFTER THIS BATTLE THAT GURU HARGOBIND RENAMED HIM TEGH BAHADUR—KNIGHT OF THE SWORD.

WHEN GURU HARGOBIND'S END DREW NEAR, HE APPOINTED YOUNG HAR RAI, TEGH BAHADUR'S NEPHEW, AS THE GURU. THE GURU WAS THEN AT KEERATPUR.

GURU HARGOBIND LEFT FOR HIS HEAVENLY ABODE ON MARCH 4, 1644.

TEGH BAHADUR MOVED OUT OF AMRITSAR WITH HIS WIFE GUJRI AND MOTHER NANKI, AND PROCEEDED TO THE VILLAGE OF BAKALA.

THERE I WILL SPEND MY TIME IN THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH.

FOR THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS HE LIVED AT BAKALA DEVOTING ALL HIS TIME TO MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATION.

BUT HE KEPT HIMSELF INFORMED OF THE HAPPENINGS IN KEERATPUR. ONE DAY—

GURU HAR RAI IS DEAD. HIS SON HAR KRISHEN IS THE NEXT GURU.

A FEW MONTHS LATER —

GURU HAR KRISHEN HAS GONE TO DELHI AT THE INVITATION OF AURANGZEB.

A FEW WEEKS LATER—

HAVE YOU HEARD ? GURU HAR KRISHEN IS NO MORE. HE DIED OF SMALL-POX. WHILE DYING HE UTTERED THE WORDS BABA BAKALE*.

WHEN THE NEWS SPREAD AT BAKALA, IMPOSTORS CAME FORWARD TO CLAIM THE TITLE.

I, DHIRMAL, THE GRANDSON OF GURU HARGOBIND AM THE GURU.

I AM THE NINTH GURU.

MEANWHILE, MAKHAN SHAH, A RICH TRADER WAS ON HIS WAY HOME. HIS SHIP WAS CAUGHT IN A STORM.

I SHALL DONATE FIVE HUNDRED GOLD COINS TO THE GURU...

...IF BY HIS GRACE I LAND SAFELY AT THE NEAREST PORT.

LATER—

WE HAVE REACHED SAFELY. I MUST FULFIL MY VOW

* THE NEXT GURU IS AT BAKALA

MAKHAN SHAH WITH HIS CONVOY ARRIVED AT BAKALA.

IS HE A NEW CLAIMANT TO THE TITLE?

NO, HE IS THE OWNER OF THE SHIPS WHICH CARRY PROVISIONS TO THE MUGHAL ARMY.

WHEN MAKHAN SHAH LEARNT THAT GURU HAR KRISHEN WAS DEAD, HE BEGAN HIS SEARCH FOR THE NEW GURU.

LISTEN TO ME. I SHALL GUIDE YOU.

THERE ARE MANY PRETENDERS HERE WHO ALL CLAIM TO BE HIS SUCCESSORS.

I WILL HAVE TO TEST THE CLAIMANTS.

HE FIRST WENT TO DHIRMAL'S CANOPY AND OFFERED HIM A SINGLE GOLD COIN.

I AM THE TRUE GURU. RICH PEOPLE LIKE YOU SHOULD BECOME MY DISCIPLES.

HE DOES NOT KNOW WHY I AM HERE.

HE IS NOT THE TRUE GURU.

NO, HE TOO IS NOT THE TRUE SUCCESSOR.

LATER —

I VISITED ALL THE GURUS HERE. NOT ONE OF THEM COULD DIVINE THAT I HAD VOWED TO OFFER FIVE HUNDRED SOVEREIGNS.

THERE IS ONE LEFT. WHY DON'T YOU MEET HIM TOO?

WHEN MAKHAN SHAH WENT TO SEE TEGH BAHADUR —

BE CONVINCED AND FULFIL YOUR PROMISE LIKE A TRUE DEVOTEE BY OFFERING THE PROMISED FIVE HUNDRED SOVEREIGNS INSTEAD OF ONE.

MAKHAN SHAH WAS ELATED.

I HAVE FOUND HIM! I HAVE FOUND THE TRUE GURU!

STUNNED BY THE TURN OF EVENTS, DHIRMAL AND HIS DISCIPLE, SHIHAN, PLANNED TO KILL THE GURU.

HIRE A BAND OF RUFFIANS TO DO THE JOB.

BUT WHEN THE CONSPIRATORS ATTACKED —

DON'T SPARE THEM! LET NO HARM COME TO THE GURU.

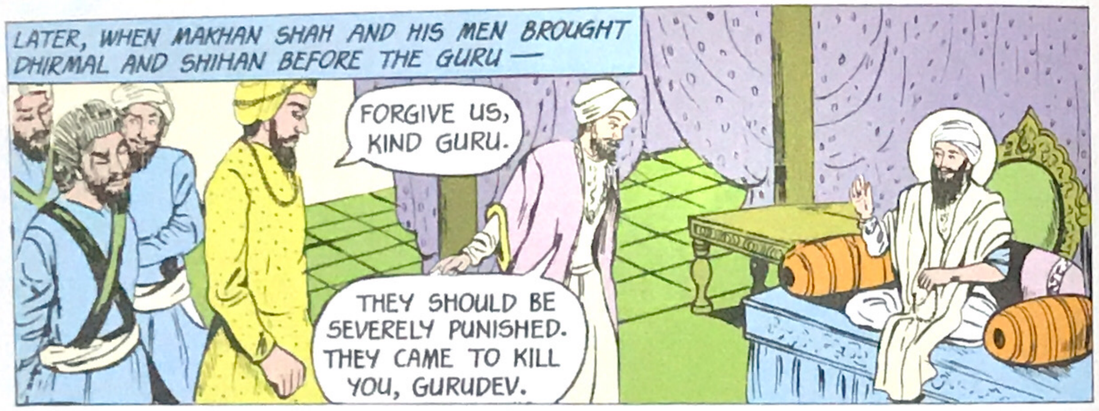
SHIHAN RAISED HIS GUN AND SHOT AT THE GURU...

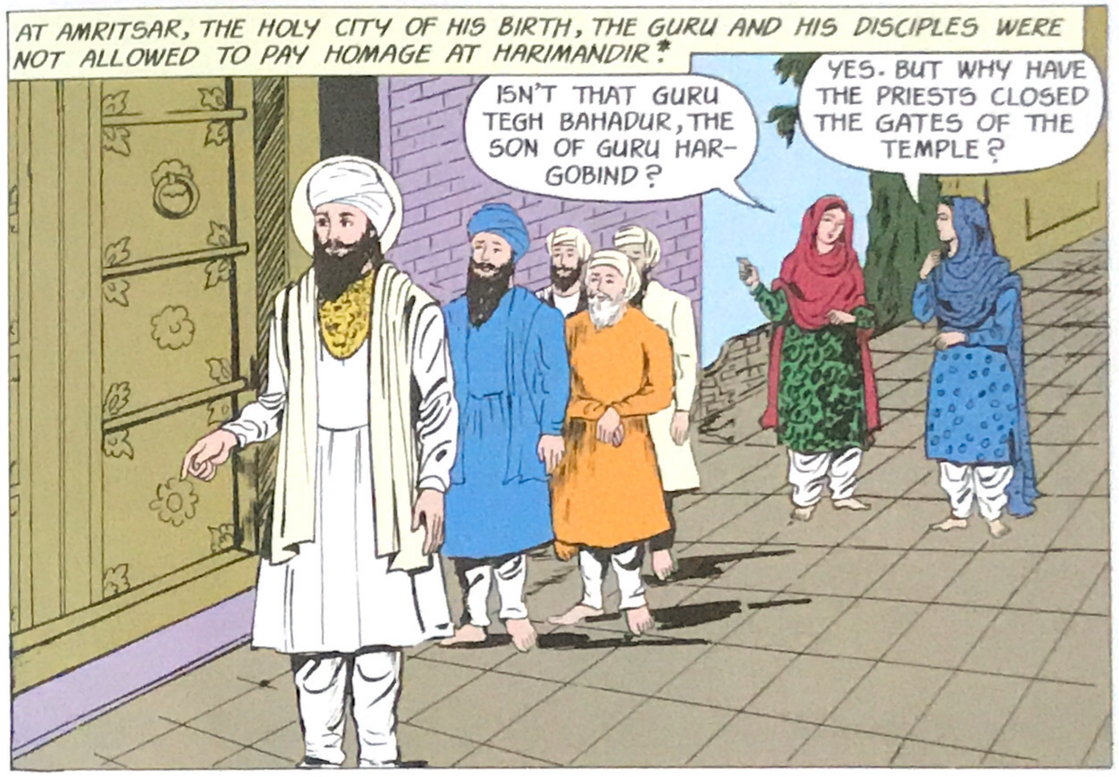
...BUT THE GURU'S FOLLOWERS WERE TOO QUICK FOR HIM.

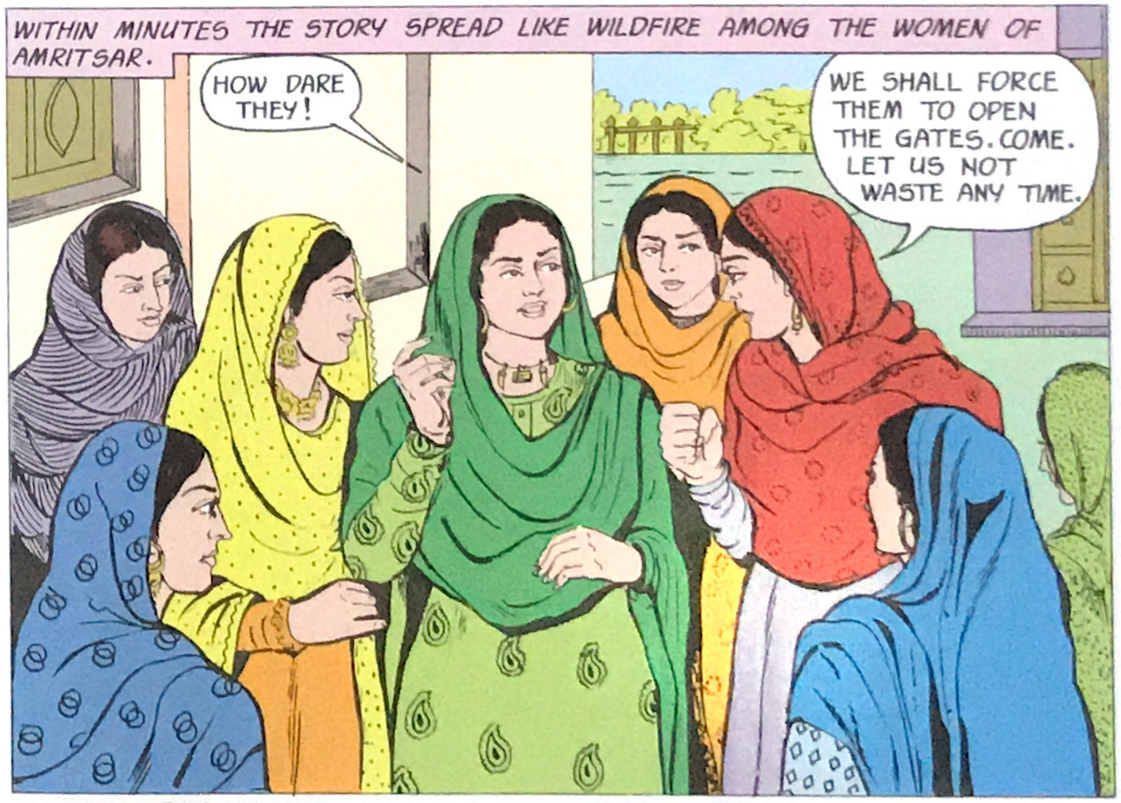
CATCH THE BANDITS! DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!

DHIRMAL! YOU ARE MY NEPHEW! YOU SHOULD NOT INDULGE IN SUCH DEEDS.

DHIRMAL'S MEN BEAT A HASTY RETREAT.







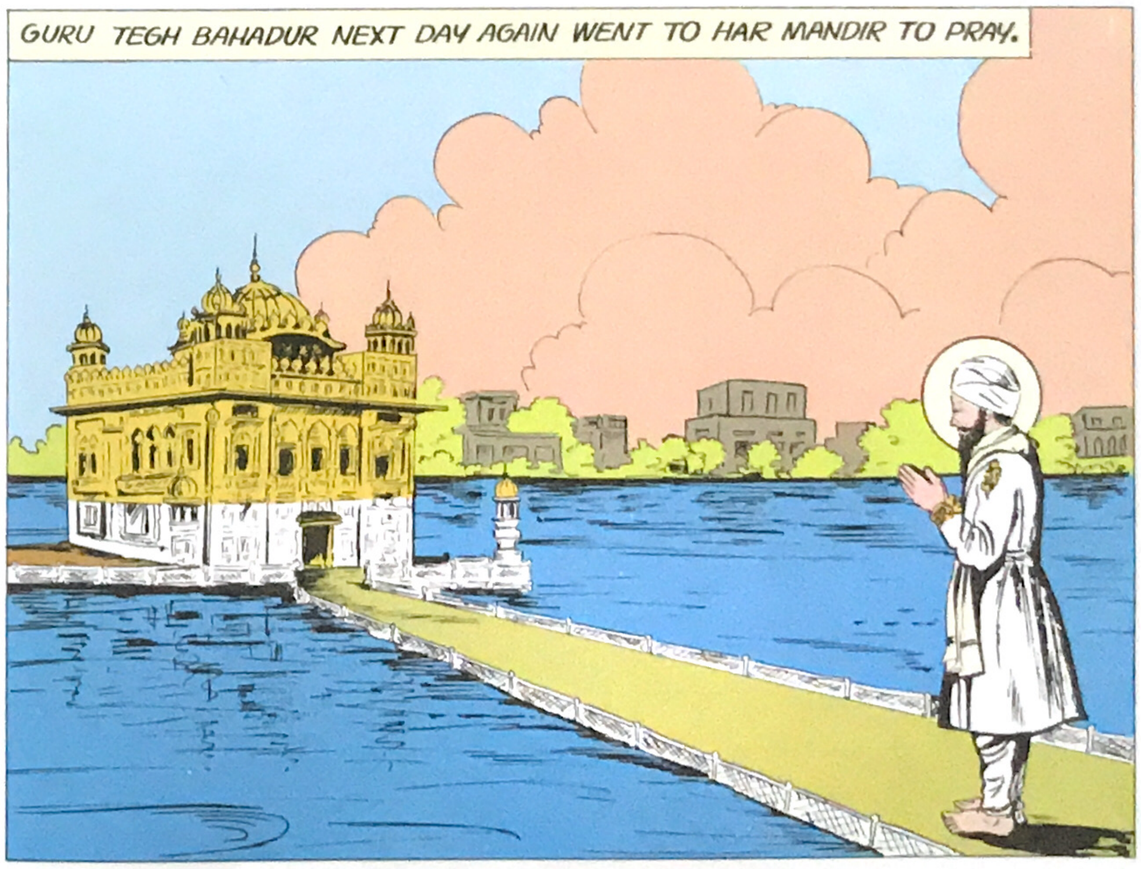
* THE GOLDEN TEMPLE.

OPEN THE GATES.
OPEN THE GATES.
LET THE GURU ENTER.

THE PRIESTS HAD TO GIVE IN. THEY OPENED THE DOOR.
WHY DIDN'T YOU LET THE GRANDSON OF THE FOUNDER OF THE MANDIR ENTER THE TEMPLE?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE IDEALS OF OUR FAITH?

WE ARE SORRY. WE DID NOT KNOW WHO THE TRUE SUCCESSOR OF GURU HAR KRISHEN WAS.
THESE ARE LAME EXCUSES. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT GURU TEGH BAHADUR IS THE TRUE SUCCESSOR.

THE NEXT DAY THE PRIESTS APOLOGISED.
GURU TEGH BAHADUR IS THE TRUE SUCCESSOR.
LONG LIVE GURU TEGH BAHADUR!


GURU TEGH BAHADUR NEXT DAY AGAIN WENT TO HAR MANDIR TO PRAY.

ONCE WHEN THE GURU PASSED THROUGH RUPAR, HE CAMPED IN THE LARGE GARDEN OF SAIFABAD. THE NAWAB OF SAIFABAD AND HIS BEGUM CAME TO SEE THE GURU WITH GIFTS.

WON'T YOU HONOUR ME BY STAYING AT MY HUMBLE DWELLING?

FRIEND SAIFUDDIN, YOU ARE PURE OF HEART. WE ARE PLEASED TO ACCEPT YOUR INVITATION.

A FORTNIGHT LATER—

I CANNOT STAY FOR LONG AT ONE PLACE. I MUST MOVE ON.

ACCEPT MY HUMBLE OFFERINGS. YOU MAY NEED THEM DURING YOUR TRAVELS.

I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU. I SHALL RIDE THIS HORSE. THE UTENSILS WILL BE USED IN THE LANGAR*. THESE CAMELS WILL CARRY THE LOADS OF THE CONVOY.

AT THE HOLY CITY OF VARANASI—

GURUDEV, I WISH TO GO AND BATHE IN THE GANGA.

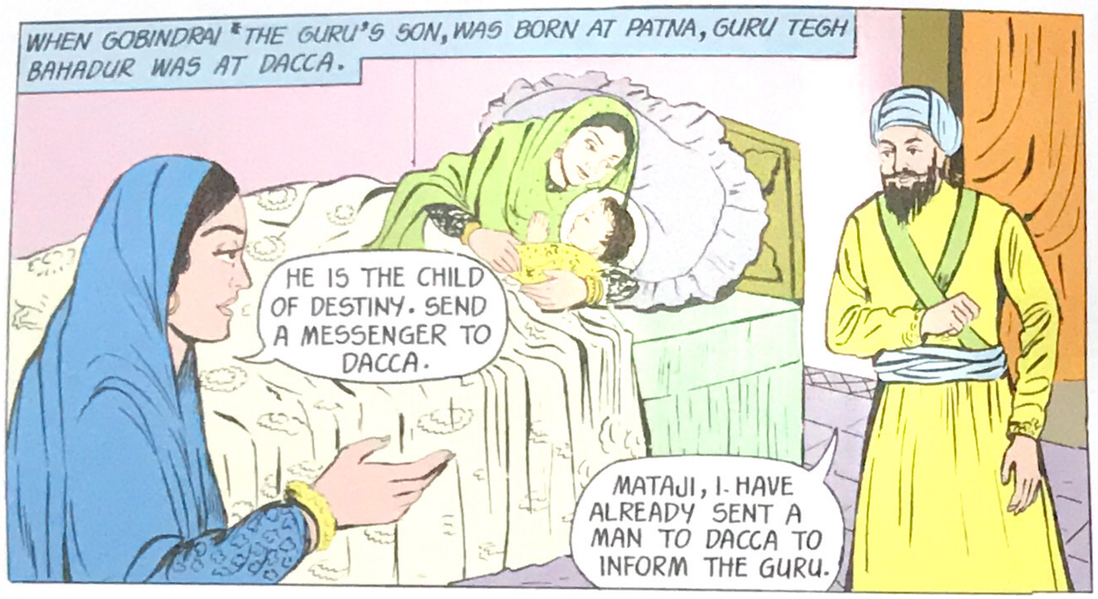
WHY GO OUT? DIG ANYWHERE IN THIS ROOM AND YOU WILL FIND THE CLEAR WATER OF THE GANGA.

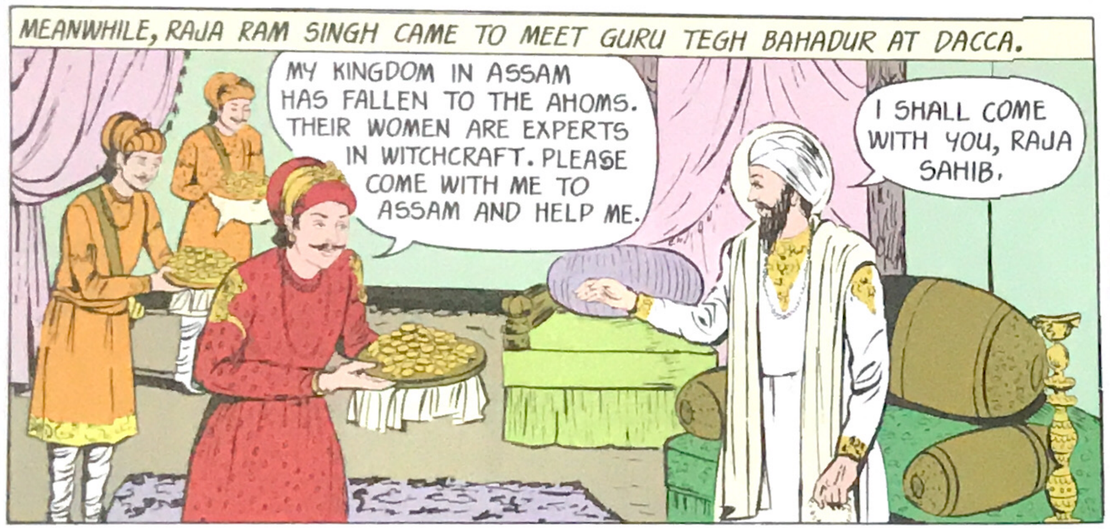
A HOLE WAS DUG IN THE ROOM.

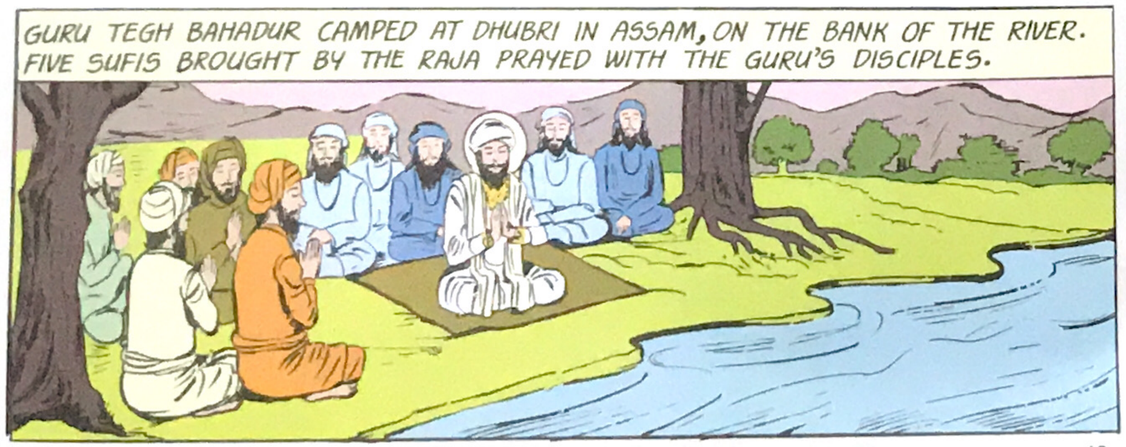
LOOK! WATER!

MAY YOUR HEART EVER REMAIN PURE LIKE THE CLEAR WATERS OF THE GANGA.

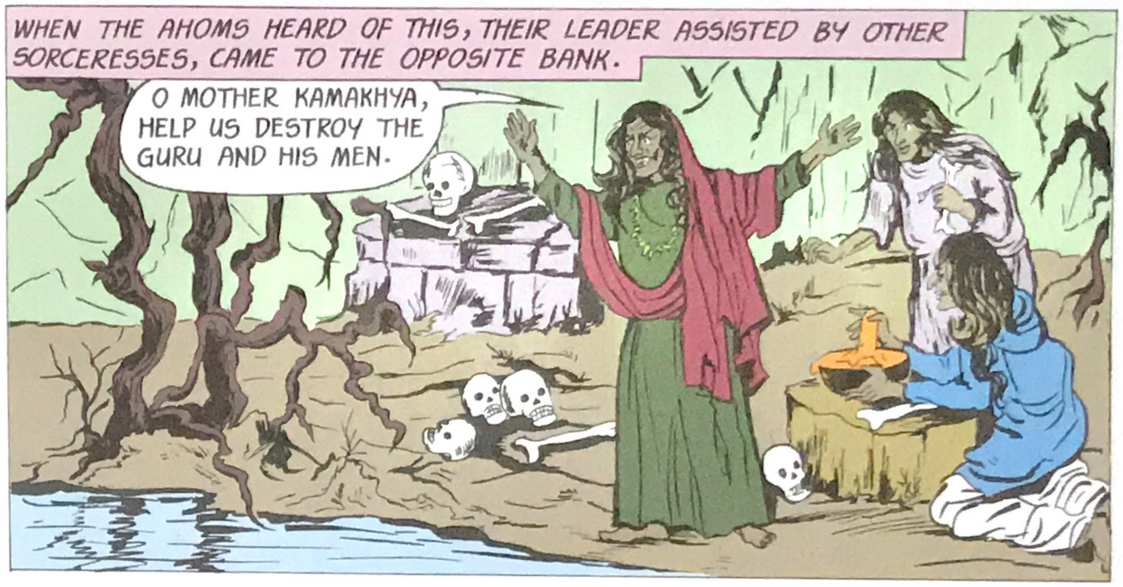
* COMMUNITY KITCHEN

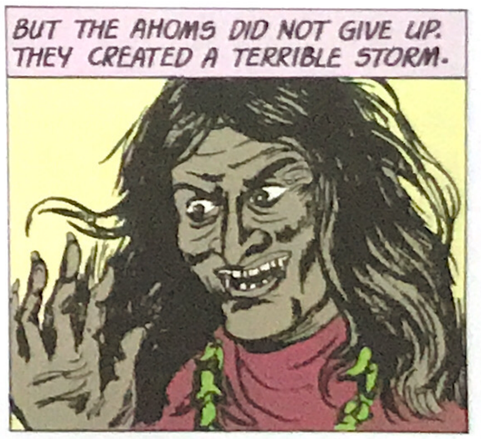




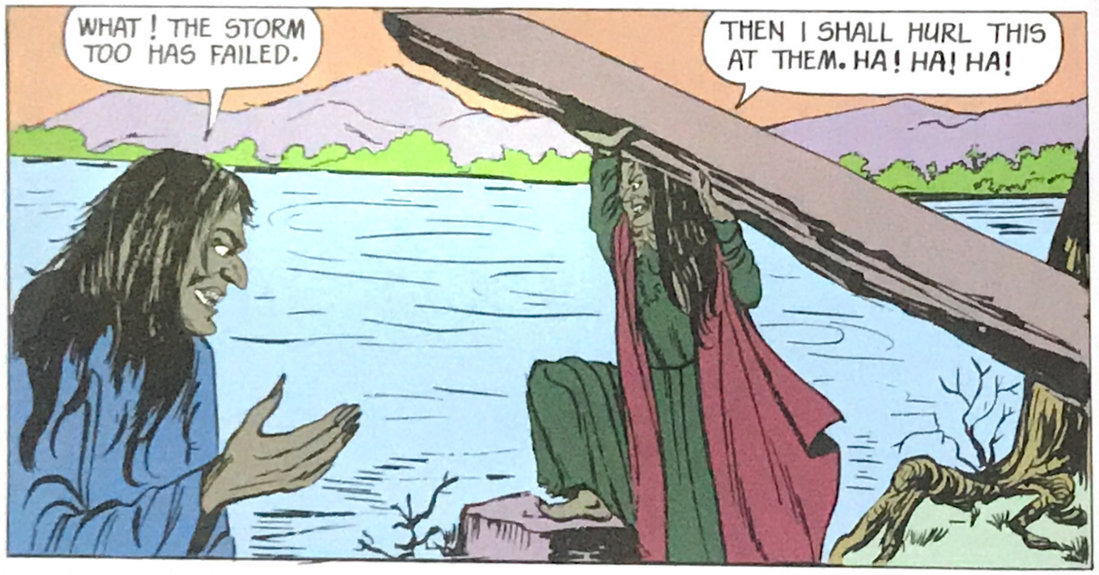


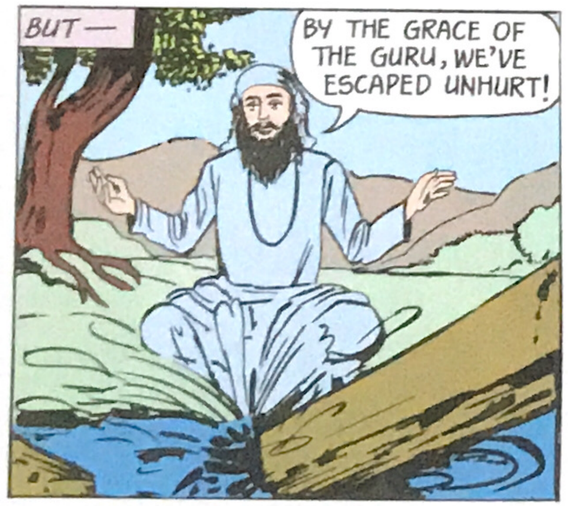
* WHO LATER BECAME THE TENTH GURU, GOBIND SINGH



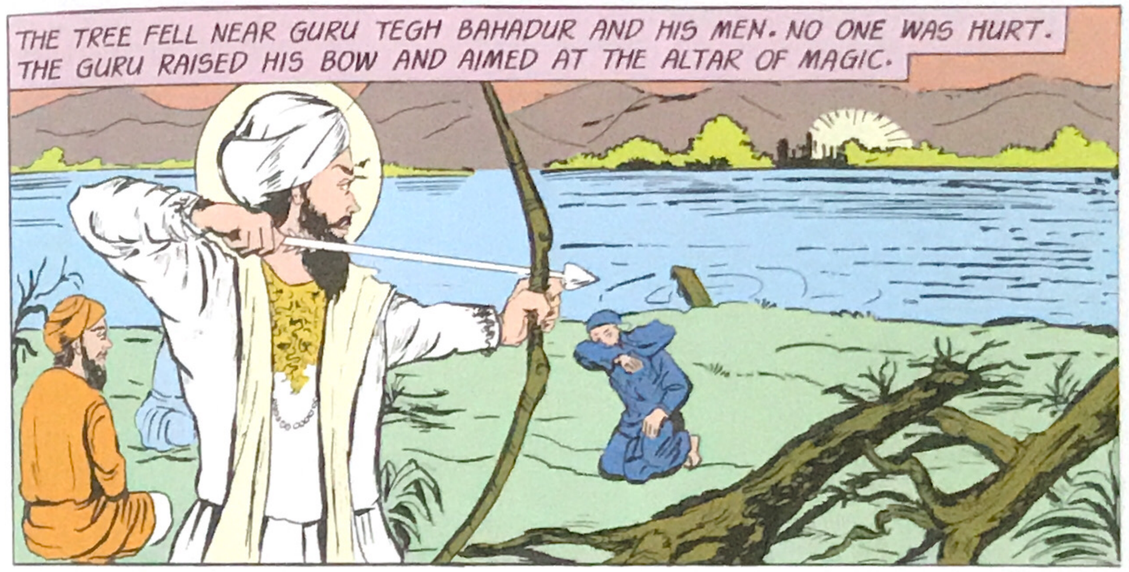


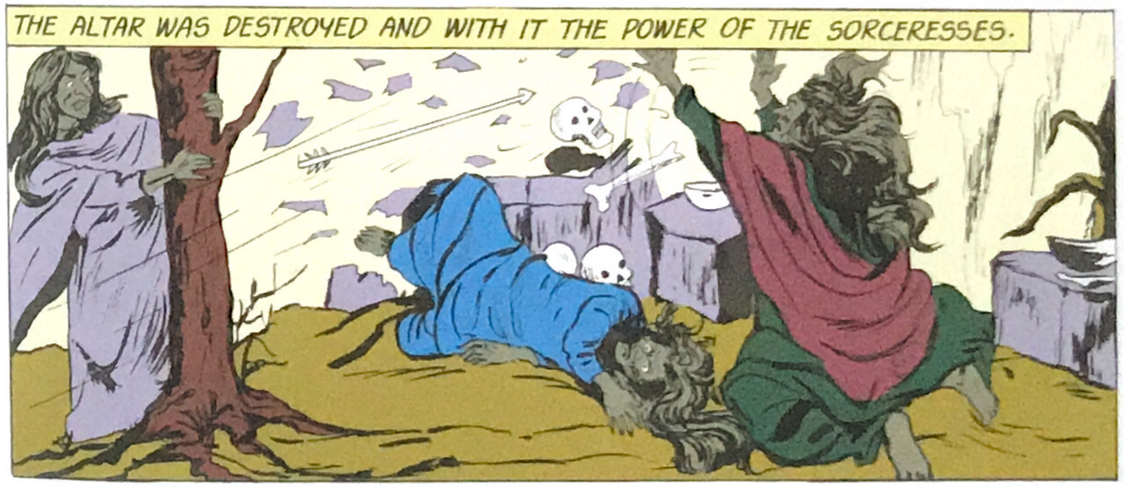
BUT THE GURU WAS UNPERTURBED.
THY NAME IS DIVINE!


WHAT! THE STORM TOO HAS FAILED.
THEN I SHALL HURL THIS AT THEM. HA! HA! HA!


BUT—
BY THE GRACE OF THE GURU, WE'VE ESCAPED UNHURT!

BUT YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE THIS TIME. HI! HI! HI!


THE TREE FELL NEAR GURU TEGH BAHADUR AND HIS MEN. NO ONE WAS HURT.
THE GURU RAISED HIS BOW AND AIMED AT THE ALTAR OF MAGIC.


THE ALTAR WAS DESTROYED AND WITH IT THE POWER OF THE SORCERESSES.

THE LEADER CAME ACROSS AND FELL AT THE GURU'S FEET.
FORGIVE ME, O HOLY ONE.
ARISE! DO NOT WASTE YOUR VITAL ENERGY ON THE EVIL, DESTRUCTIVE PRACTICE OF SORCERY. GIVE IT UP.

SADGURUJI, YOU SAVED MY KINGDOM FROM THE EVIL ONES.

THEY ARE REPENTANT, RAJA SAHIB. FORGIVE THEM.

AT THE INSTANCE OF THE GURU, TRUCE WAS DECLARED BETWEEN RAJA RAM SINGH AND THE AHOM KING.

NOW THERE SHOULD BE NO WAR BETWEEN YOU.

THERE WILL NOT BE. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE GURU FOR SHOWING US THE RIGHT PATH.

ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE GURU AND HIS DISCIPLES WERE CAMPING IN THE PUNJAB, FOUR THIEVES PROWLED NEAR THEIR TENTS INTENDING TO ROB THEM. SUDDENLY —

LOOK! A TIGER!

IT MAY KILL US. WE MUST RUN FOR OUR LIVES.

TWO OF THE THIEVES RAN AWAY.

COWARDS! LET THEM GO. WE SHALL TAKE AWAY THIS FINE HORSE.

BUT THEY WERE CAUGHT AND TAKEN TO THE GURU.

WHO ARE YOU, BROTHERS? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WE ARE THIEVES. WE CAME HERE TO STEAL WHATEVER WE COULD.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO STEAL WHAT BELONGS TO YOU. TAKE THE HORSE AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED.

NO, GURUJI! FORGIVE US GURUJI. WE HAVE SINNED. FORGIVE US!

MEANWHILE THERE WAS UNREST IN NORTH INDIA. IT WAS CAUSED BY THE RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE OF THE MUGHAL EMPEROR, AURANGZEB.

AURANGZEB HAS THROWN HUNDREDS OF BRAHMANS INTO JAIL.

ONE DAY, SOME PROMINENT KASHMIRIS CAME TO THE GURUJI.

HINDUS IN KASHMIR ARE BEING SEVERELY REPRESSED BY AURANGZEB AND THEIR WOMEN-FOLK ARE BEING KIDNAPPED.

ALL HINDUS ARE BEING FORCIBLY CONVERTED TO ISLAM.

AS A RELIGIOUS LEADER, I MUST PROTECT THE DHARMA.

WRITE TO AURANGZEB THAT IF HE SUCCEEDS IN CONVERTING TEGH BAHADUR, ALL THE HINDUS OF THE COUNTRY WILL ACCEPT ISLAM. IF HE FAILS TO DO SO, HE MUST GIVE UP HIS PERVERTED POLICY OF FORCIBLE CONVERSION.

AURANGZEB HAD HIM BROUGHT TO COURT.

HOW CAN YOU CLAIM TO BE THEIR GURU WHEN YOU ARE NOT A BRAHMAN?

EVERY COMMUNITY MUST HAVE THE RIGHT AND THE FREEDOM TO PRACTISE ITS RELIGION.

GIVE YOUR FINAL ANSWER, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO EMBRACE ISLAM?

THE POLICY OF FORCED CONVERSION CANNOT, IN THE LONG RUN, BEAR ANY FRUIT, YOUR MAJESTY.

GURU TEGH BAHADUR AND HIS COMPANIONS WERE LOCKED UP IN THE CHANDNI CHOWK KOTWALI. SOME PROMINENT SIKHS OF DELHI CAME TO MEET THE GURU.

SATGURUJI, THE EMPEROR MAY ISSUE ORDERS TO KILL YOU. PLEASE PERMIT US TO BUY YOUR FREEDOM.

I HAVE COME HERE WITH THE FIRM INTENTION OF EITHER CHANGING THE MIND OF AURANGZEB OR SACRIFICING MY LIFE FOR THE CAUSE.

THE PRISONERS WERE SUMMONED TO THE COURT. AURANGZEB'S QAZI* PERSEVERED IN HIS ATTEMPTS TO CONVERT THE GURU.

YOU ARE NOW AT THE MERCY OF THE EMPEROR. ACCEPT ISLAM.

INDIA IS A LAND OF MANY RACES, RELIGIONS AND CULTURES. IT IS WRONG TO IMPOSE ONE'S RELIGION ON THOSE WHO BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY.

THE EMPEROR COMMANDS YOU TO EITHER ACCEPT ISLAM OR SHOW KARAMAT.**

I DO NOT BELIEVE IN DISPLAYING OCCULT POWERS TO SAVE MY LIFE.

* A MUSLIM JUDGE. ** MIRACLES.

THEN YOUR DISCIPLES SHALL BE TORTURED TO DEATH AND YOU WILL BE BEHEADED — A WARNING FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO EMULATE YOU.

LATER —

IT WAS NO IDLE THREAT! BHAI MATI DAS WAS SAWN ALIVE. BUT HE SUFFERED THE TORTURE WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE!

BHAI DAYALA WAS FLUNG INTO A CAUL DRON OF BOILING WATER!

BHAI SATI DAS WAS WRAPPED IN COTTON AND BURNT ALIVE.

ALL THIS WAS DONE BEFORE THE VERY EYES OF THE GURU. BUT HE DID NOT FLINCH.

IT WAS TEGH BAHADUR'S TURN NEXT.

HE WAS BEHEADED. THE MUGHALS REFUSED TO GIVE HIS BODY TO HIS DEVOTEES.

BHAI JETHA STOLE THE HEAD OF THE GURU.

THE LORD HAS LEFT FOR HEAVEN.

HOW CAN WE LIVE WITHOUT HIM?

SUDDENLY A STORM BROKE IN THE CITY.

A CONVOY APPROACHED THE SITE. IT BELONGED TO LAKHI SHAH, THE BANJARA.*

MAKE WAY FOR THE CONVOY OF THE ROYAL CONTRACTOR.

*A NOMADIC COMMUNITY WHO MADE ITS LIVING BY TRANSPORTING GOODS FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER.

AS SOON AS THE CONVOY DEPARTED, THE STORM SUBSIDED.

THE HEAD AND THE BODY HAVE DISAPPEARED!

IT'S A MIRACLE!

COULD THEY HAVE RISEN UP TO HEAVEN?

DON'T BE ABSURD!

MEANWHILE, AT THE HOUSE OF LAKHI SHAH —

SADGURUJI, YOU SACRIFICED YOUR LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF OUR DHARMA! BY YOUR GRACE I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WREST YOUR MORTAL REMAINS FROM THE ENEMY.

BUT HOW SHALL I CREMATE THE GURU'S BODY WITHOUT THE EMPEROR'S MEN SUSPECTING ANYTHING?

I KNOW! I'LL SET FIRE TO MY HOUSE. EVERYONE WILL DISMISS IT AS A CASE OF FIRE.

MEANWHILE BHAI JETHA CARRIED THE HEAD OF THE GURU TO GOBINDRAI, MATA GUJRI AND MATA NANKI AT KEERATPUR.

MY SON! MY SON! I WISH I HAD NOT LIVED TO SEE THIS DAY.

FATHER!

THEY CARRIED THE HEAD OF THE GURU, IN A PALANQUIN, TO ANANDPUR.

THERE LAY THE HEAD OF THE GURU WHO SACRIFICED HIS LIFE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE DHARMA. IT WAS CREMATED AND TO THIS DAY, HE IS REMEMBERED WITH LOVE AND ADMIRATION BY PEOPLE OF ALL CREEDS.